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(54) **SYSTEM AND METHODS FOR PREPARATION OF ADIPOSE-DERIVED STEM CELLS**

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USPC **604/92**, **518**; **435/325**, **374**
See application file for complete search history.

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

A device that allows for either fat graft preparation or cell fraction harvest is disclosed. The device includes a first centrifuge tube configured to receive and process a biological substance, the first centrifuge tube comprising an upper cylindrical portion and a lower conical portion, a sterile tissue inlet fitting, at least one sterile processing fluid inlet fitting, a sterile suction fitting, and at least one sterile extraction port connected to a first extraction tube. The first centrifuge tube further includes an internal space including a screen being positioned therein, the screen being configured to divide the internal space in half, and a filter positioned therein, the filter being positioned below the screen in the lower conical portion of the first centrifuge tube. The device may further include a second centrifuge tube configured to receive and further process the biological substance from the first centrifuge tube. The second centrifuge tube has at least one sterile fitting, wherein the second centrifuge tube is releasably connected via the at least one sterile fitting to one of the at least one sterile extraction ports of the first centrifuge tube.

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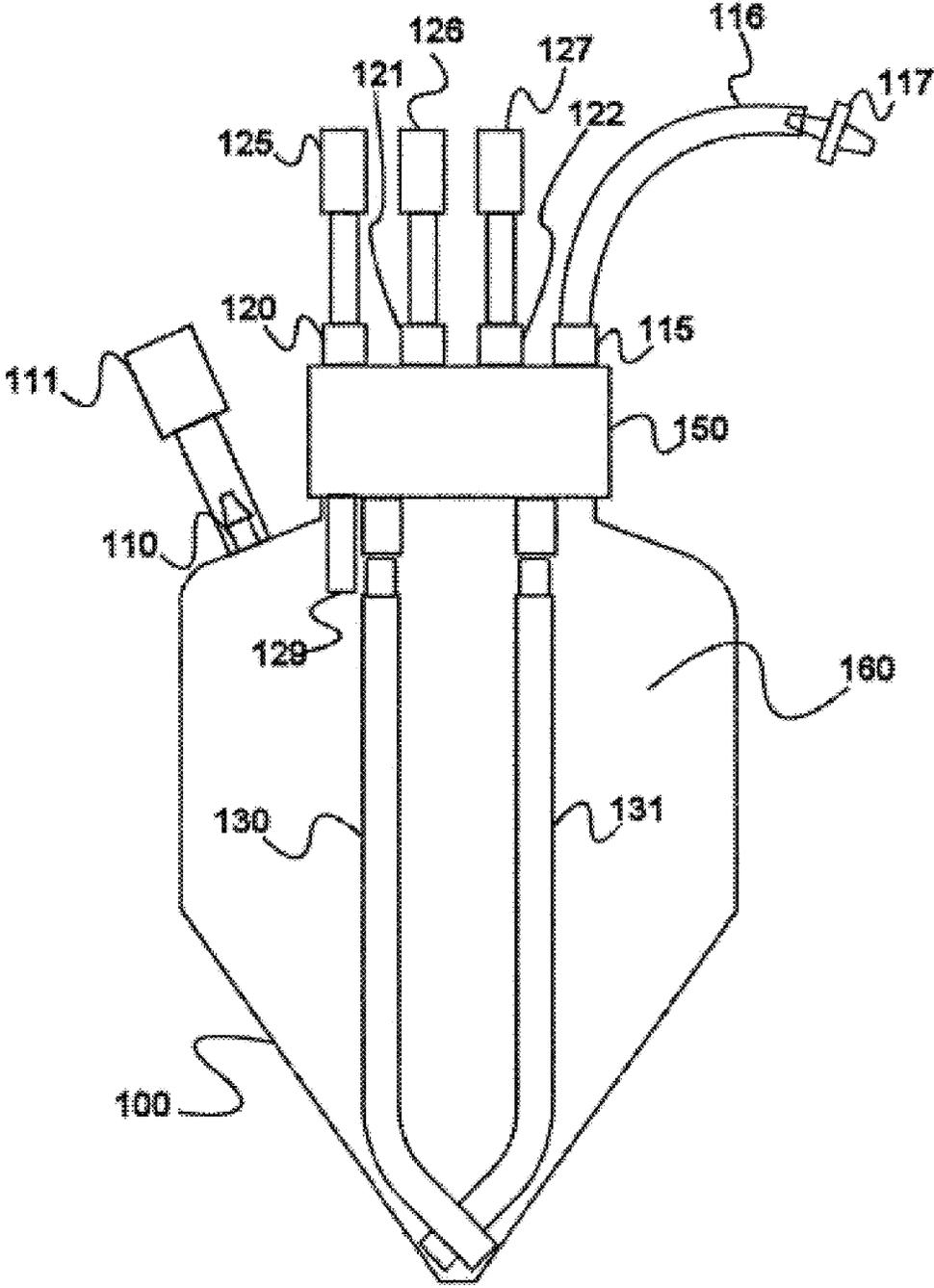


Fig. 1

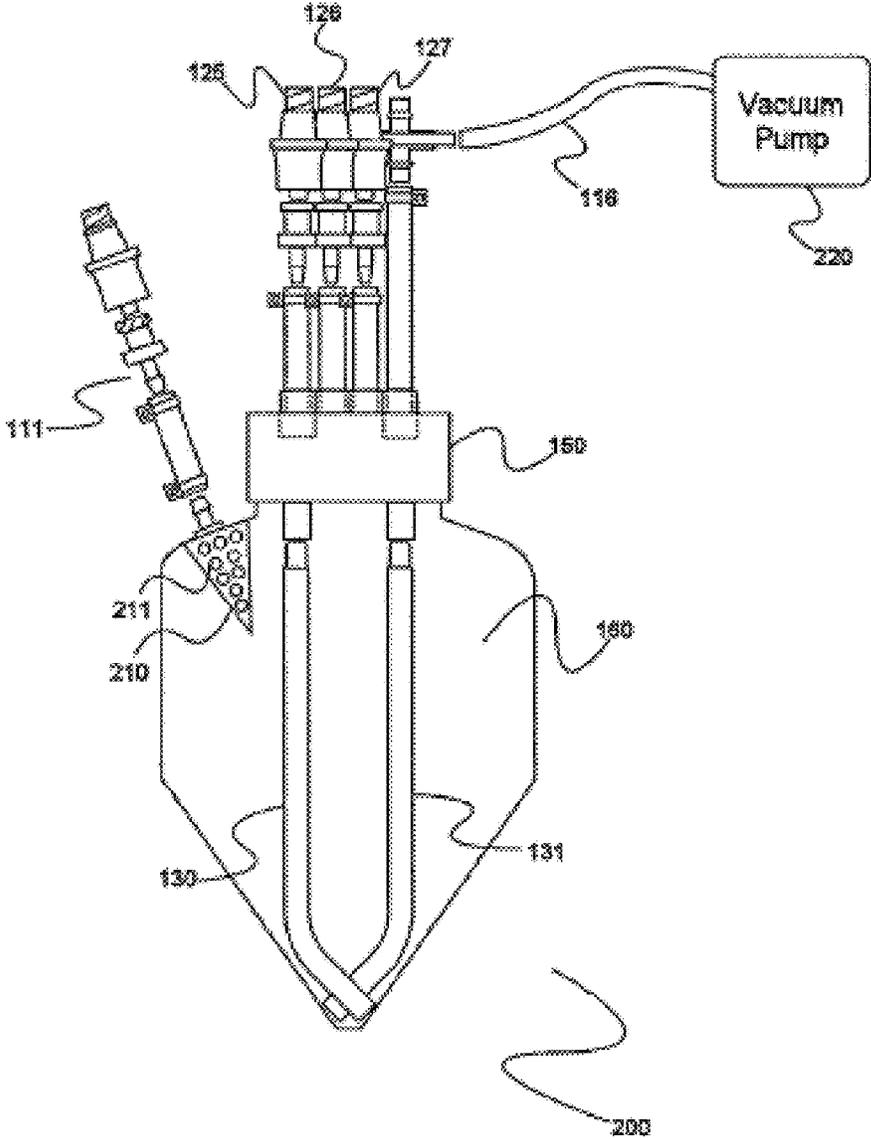


Fig. 2

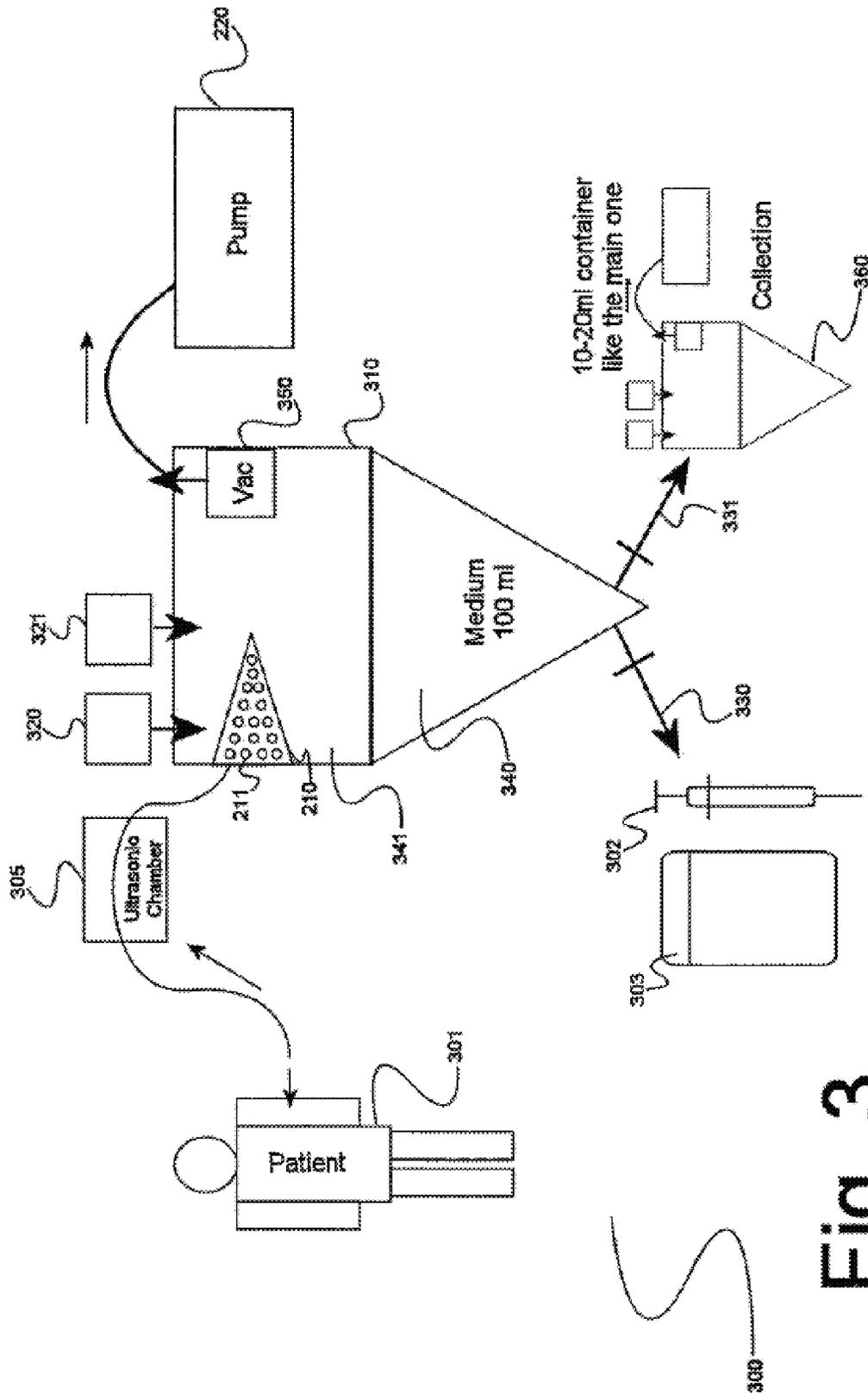


Fig. 3

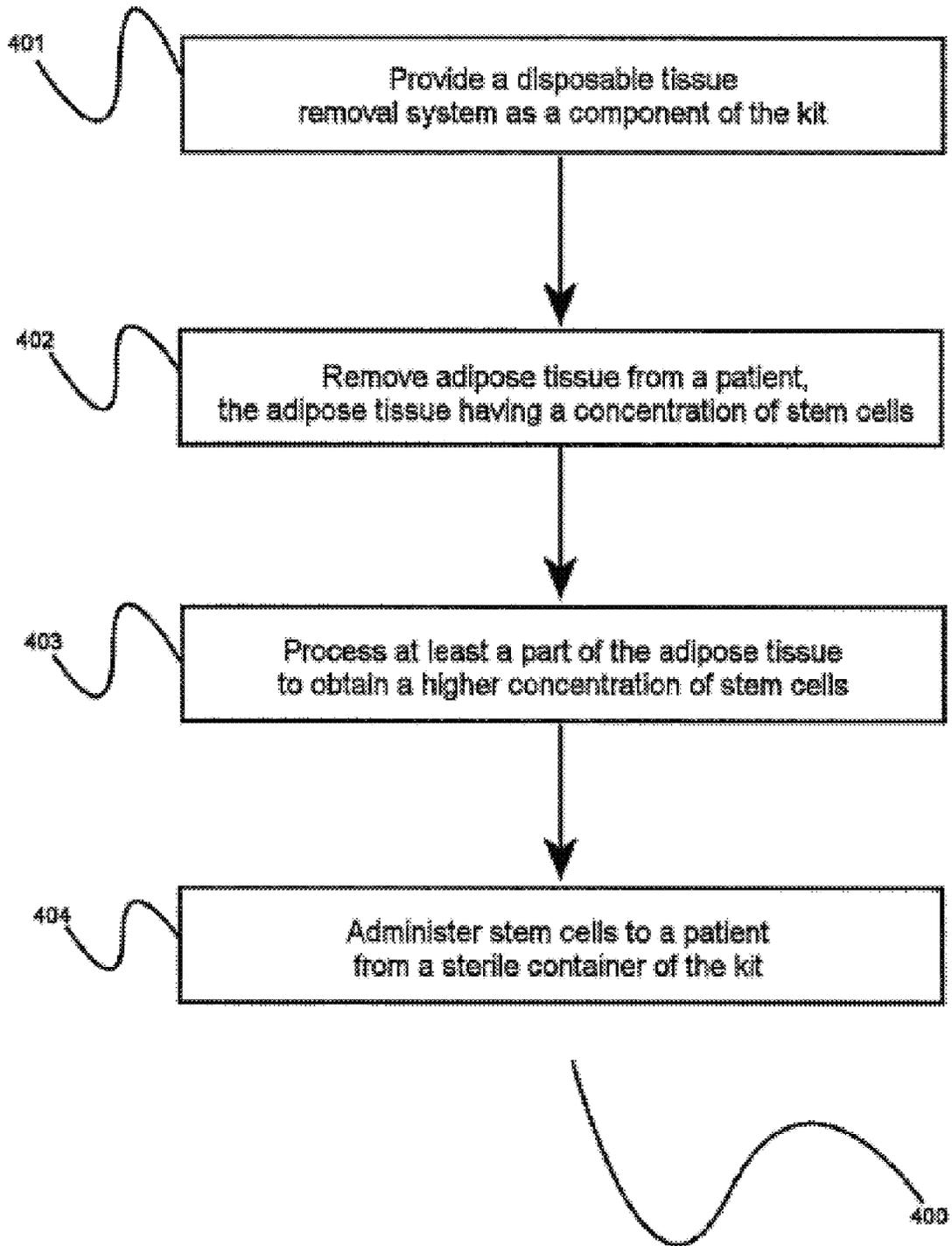


Fig. 4

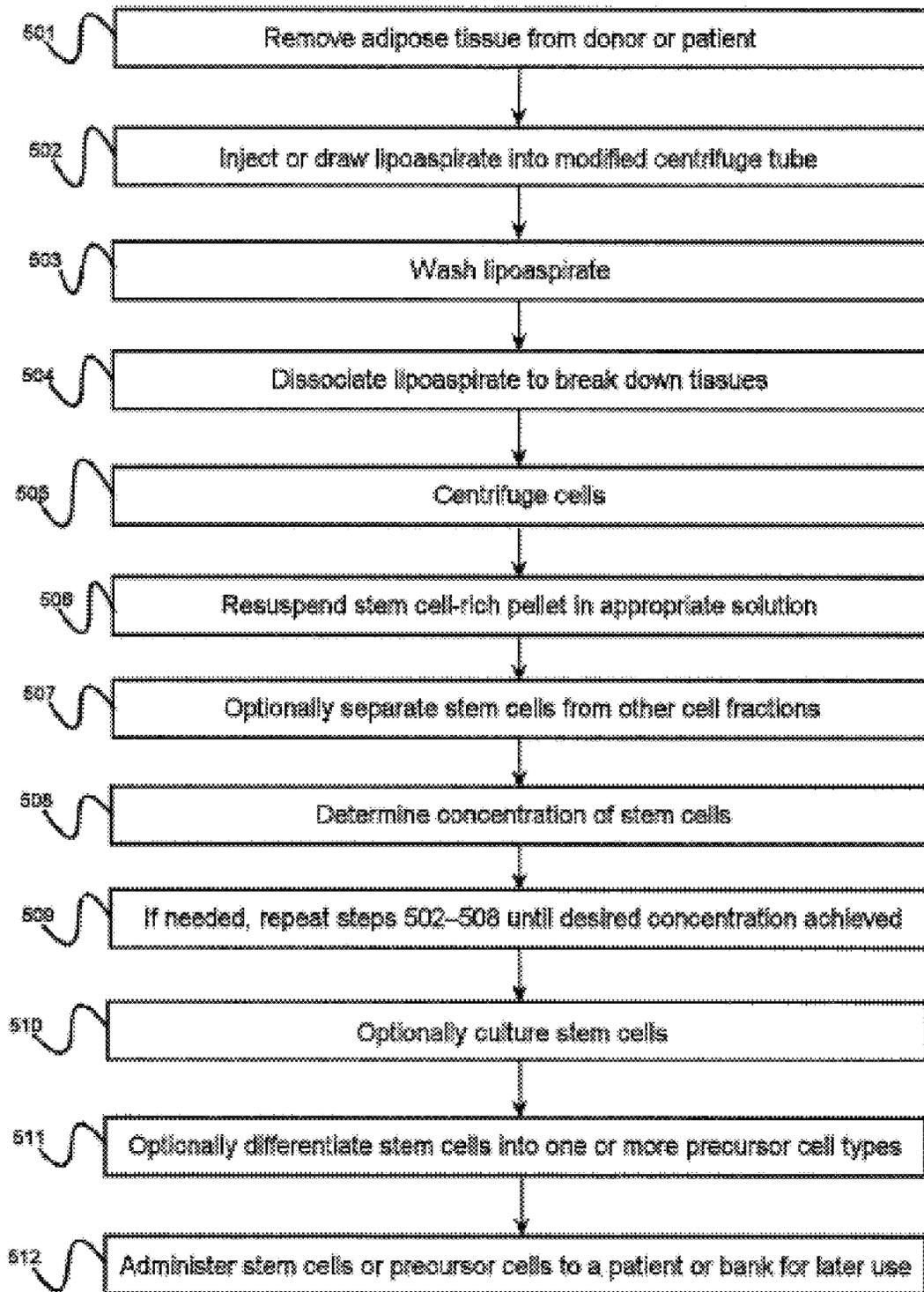


Fig. 5



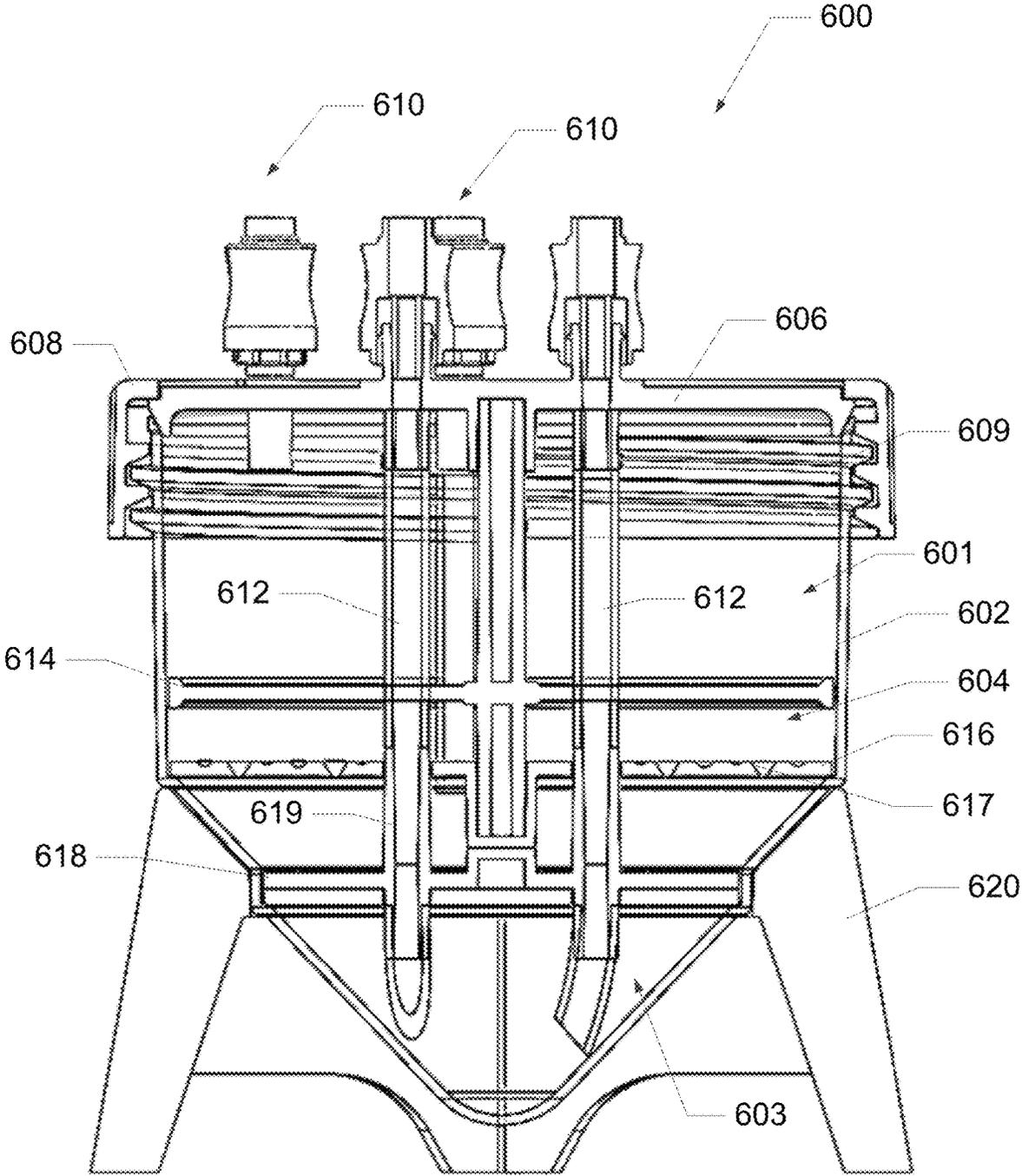


Fig. 6

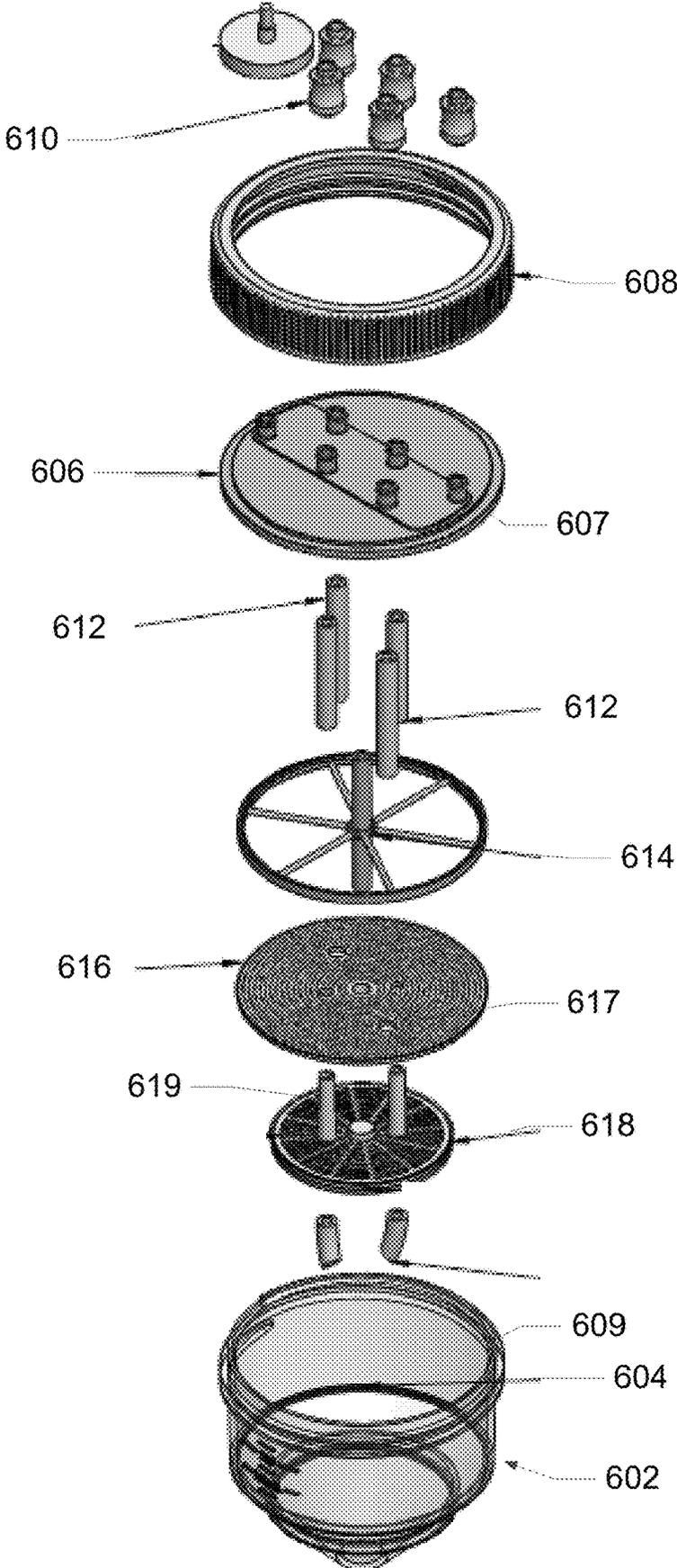


Fig. 7

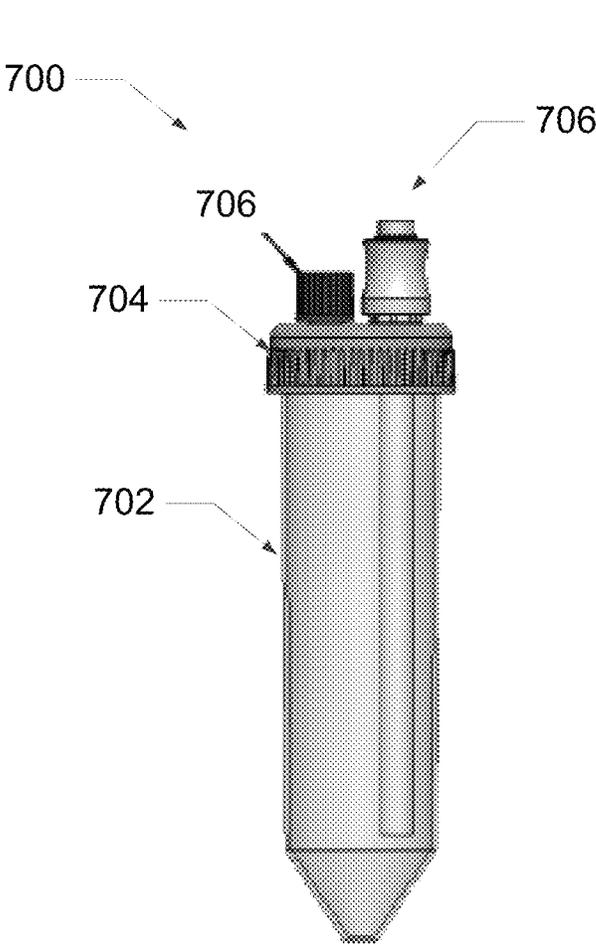


Fig. 8

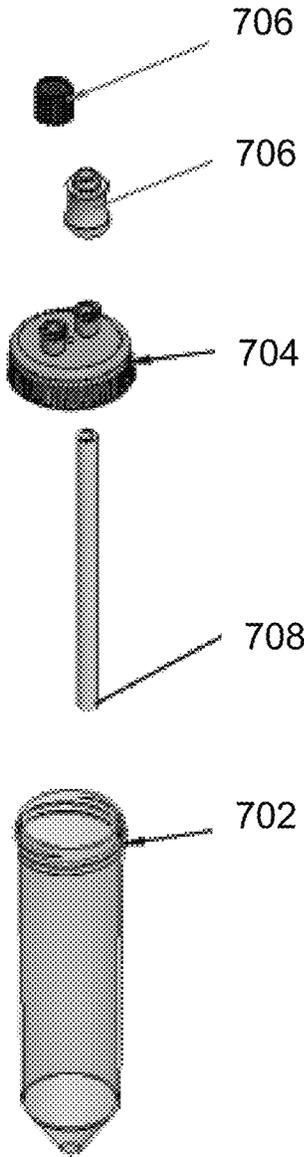


Fig. 9

SYSTEM AND METHODS FOR PREPARATION OF ADIPOSE-DERIVED STEM CELLS

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

This application is a continuation-in-part of U.S. application Ser. No. 13/544,909 filed on Jul. 9, 2012, now U.S. Pat. No. 9,931,445, which claims priority to U.S. provisional patent application Ser. No. 61/505,936, titled "KIT FOR THE PREPARATION OF ADIPOSE-DERIVED STEM CELLS", filed on Jul. 8, 2011. The entire disclosure contents of these applications are herewith incorporated by reference into the present application.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Field of the Invention

This invention generally discloses systems for preparing and using stems cells derived from adipose tissue, adipose-derived stem cells obtained with such kit, methods of using such adipose-derived stem cells, compositions containing such adipose-derived stem cells.

2. Discussion of the State of the Art

Regenerative medicine can be defined as harnessing the body's regenerative mechanisms in a clinically targeted manner, using them in ways that are not part of the normal healing mechanism or by artificially amplifying normal mechanisms. One classic example of this process is found in bone marrow transplantation where hematopoietic stem and progenitor cells are harvested from a donor and placed into a recipient, in whom the normal hematopoietic regenerative mechanisms have been ablated or substantially depleted or impaired, thereby replacing or regenerating the blood-forming capacity of the recipient. This approach has been extended to the non-hematopoietic stem cells from a variety of sources for multiple therapeutic or prophylactic purposes. In particular, it has been demonstrated that adipose tissue can readily be used as a source of multipotent mesenchymal stem cells suitable for therapeutic or prophylactic use.

Mesenchymal Stem Cells ("MSCs") are pluripotent stem cells that can differentiate readily into lineages including osteoblasts, myocytes, chondrocytes, adipocytes, endothelial cells, and beta pancreatic islet cells (Pittenger, et al., *Science*, Vol. 284, pg. 143 (1999); Haynesworth, et al., *Bone*, Vol. 13, pg. 69 (1992); Prockop, *Science*, Vol. 276, pg. 71 (1997)). MSCs, also known in the literature as bone marrow stem cells, skeletal stem cells, and multipotent mesenchymal stromal cells, are non-hematopoietic progenitor cells isolated from adult tissues, and are characterized in vitro by their extensive proliferative ability in an uncommitted state while retaining the potential to differentiate along various lineages of mesenchymal origin, including chondrocyte, osteoblast, and adipocyte lineages, in response to appropriate stimuli. In vitro studies have demonstrated the capability of MSCs to differentiate into muscle (Wakitani, et al., *Muscle Nerve*, Vol. 18, pg. 1417 (1995)), neuronal-like precursors (Woodbury, et al., *J. Neurosci. Res.*, Vol. 69, pg. 908 (2002); Sanchez-Ramos, et al., *Exp. Neurol.*, Vol. 171, pg. 109 (2001)), cardiomyocytes (Toma, et al., *Circulation*, Vol. 105, pg. 93 (2002); Fakuda, *Artif. Organs*, Vol. 25, pg. 187 (2001)) and possibly other cell types. MSCs are present in multiple tissues in the body, which arise from the embry-

onic mesoderm (e.g., hematopoietic cells and connective tissue). As such, pluripotent cells can be isolated from any of these tissue sources and can be induced to differentiate into any of these cell types.

A convenient source of adipose tissue is from liposuction surgery. In fact, a large quantity of pluripotent cells can be obtained by simple aspiration from adipose tissue, for example, from lipoaspirate samples from aesthetic interventions. The present invention is directed in particular to a system for isolating MSCs from adipose tissue. As used herein, "adipose tissue" refers to a tissue containing multiple cell types including adipocytes and microvascular cells. Adipose tissue includes stem cells and endothelial precursor cells. Accordingly, adipose tissue refers to fat including the connective tissue that stores the fat.

It has been discovered that adipose tissue is an especially rich source of stem cells. This finding may be due, at least in part, to the ease of removal of the major non-stem cell component of adipose tissue, the adipocyte. However, processing of adipose tissues to separate pluripotent cells and expansion and (optionally) differentiation of the resulting stem cell population, according to systems and methods known in the art, generally requires expensive, specialized equipment and equally expensive, specialized processes. The costs associated with purpose-built devices for repeated stem cell extraction from adipose tissues obtained by, for example, liposuction from a living human donor have restricted the use of stem cell-rich media for therapeutic purposes to large hospitals and research facilities. As a result, use of adipose-derived stem cell-based therapies by small physician or other professional practices has not been possible or economical. Moreover, use of stem cell-based cosmetic enhancement techniques has been hampered by the high cost and low availability of systems and methods currently in the art for extracting and culturing stem cells derived from adipose tissues.

What is needed are techniques and systems that facilitate economical and safe extraction of therapeutically or cosmetically useful quantities of adipose-derived stem cells, whether in pure form or as part of a stem cell enriched medium, and specifically techniques and systems that are suitable for use in small professional practices without requiring capital investments of specialized facilities.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The inventor has conceived, and reduced to practice, a system and various methods for preparation of adipose-derived stem cells that addresses the challenges and problems in the art outlined above. A cell population from human adipose tissue may be used as a source of cells for therapeutic and cosmetic applications. Among other things, adipose-derived stem cells, either in pure form (stem cells only) or in enriched form (cell cultures with an augmented fraction of stem cells relative to those occurring in vivo in adipose tissues) may be used for regenerative medicine, such as treatment of diseases that may be ameliorated or cured through use of regenerating cells. Cells of a prepared population may be administered to a patient without other adipocytes or connective tissue, or may be administered mixed together with adipose tissue in a concentrated amount, as discussed herein. The present invention is directed to a system for obtaining a purified fraction of adipose-derived mesenchymal stem cells from adipose tissue and administering the purified fraction back into a human or animal patient. The present invention provides a system for extracting adipose tissue (lipoaspirate) and processing it to generate

a processed lipoaspirate (PLA) which contains stem cells at a frequency of at least 0.1%, and more typically greater than 0.5%. PLA can in some embodiments be obtained comprising between about 2-12% stem cells, and PLA with up to 100% of cells in a population comprised of stem cells are possible, according to the invention.

The present invention is directed to a system for obtaining a substantially purified or enriched fraction of adipose-derived mesenchymal stem cells in a clinical environment and also to compositions, methods, and systems for using stem cells derived from adipose tissue that are placed directly into a recipient along with such additives as may be necessary to promote, engender, or support a therapeutic, structural, or cosmetic benefit. Embodiments of the invention provide a multi-component system for extracting and processing adipose tissue to generate a therapeutically effective amount of adipose-derived stem cells for re-introduction into a patient. Advantageously, the system does not require full operating room environment or full-scale lipoaspiration and can therefore be operated outside of a hospital or laboratory environment. The system is therefore suitable for small and mid-size medical clinics, outpatient surgical centers, and doctor's offices of multidisciplinary specialization.

In an embodiment, a system, called the Mini-Stem™ system, allows for small physician practices as well as surgical centers to employ affordable methods for safe extraction of MSC or Stromal Vascular Fraction (SVF) from adipose tissue of any patient for treatment or cryostorage (banking). SVF is a heterogeneous cell fraction that can be produced by the system. This fraction is enriched by cells bearing the properties of MSC. If the cell fraction is further cultured, the system can produce MSC from the further cultured fraction. The system comprises means for carrying out a secure, sterile, and closed process in which a small sample of fat is extracted (for example, by liposuction) as a lipoaspirate; materials for on-site processing and purification of MSC or SVF fractions; and optionally tools to assist in quality assessment of resulting processed lipoaspirate. The system is operable by a lab technician following simple method steps taught in appropriate training.

In an embodiment, adipose tissue processing occurs in a system that maintains a closed, sterile fluid/tissue pathway. This is achieved by use of a kit of sterile containers and tubing that allows for transfer of tissue and fluid elements within a closed pathway. A series of processing reagents (e.g., saline, enzymes, etc.) are also provided prepackaged for introduction into the sterile containers to allow simple control of the addition of reagents, temperature, and timing of processing thus simplify the process by which operators manually manage the process. In a preferred embodiment the entire procedure from tissue extraction through processing and placement into the recipient would all be performed in the same facility, indeed, even within the same room of the patient undergoing a procedure according to the invention.

In accordance with one aspect of the invention, a small amount of raw adipose tissue is extracted from a patient into a sterile container of the kit. The raw adipose tissue is processed within one or more sterile containers of the kit to substantially remove mature adipocytes and connective tissue, thereby obtaining a heterogeneous plurality of adipose tissue-derived cells suitable for placement within the body of a recipient. Reagents needed for processing of adipose tissue are provided as part of the kit and introduced to the one or more sterile containers according to a predetermined schedule to generate a processed lipoaspirate including a desired concentration of adipose-derived stem cells. The

adipose-derived stem cells, or a modified lipoaspirate that is enriched with a higher stem cell fraction than occurs in vivo, may then be placed into a recipient in combination with other cells, tissue, tissue fragments, or other stimulators of cell growth and/or differentiation. In a preferred embodiment, stem cells, with any of the above-mentioned additives, are placed into a person from whom they were obtained in the context of a single operative procedure with the intention of deriving a therapeutic, structural, or cosmetic benefit to the recipient.

In an embodiment of the invention, a method of treating a patient includes steps of: a) providing a disposable tissue removal system as a component of the kit; b) removing adipose tissue from a patient using the disposable tissue removal system, the adipose tissue having a concentration of stem cells; c) processing within one or more sterile containers of the kit at least a part of the adipose tissue to obtain a concentration of stem cells higher than the concentration of stem cells of the adipose tissue before processing; and d) administering the stem cells to a patient from a sterile container of the kit.

In a preferred embodiment of the invention, a system for extracting and processing adipose tissue to generate a therapeutically effective amount of adipose-derived stem cells, comprising an adipose tissue extraction device and a modified centrifuge tube comprising a plurality of lipoaspirate inlet fittings, a plurality of processing fluid inlet fittings, and a plurality of pellet extraction tubes. The adipose tissue extraction device is used to extract a quantity of adipose tissue from a human being, the lipoaspirate is moved into the first modified centrifuge tube via a sterile transfer, a plurality of processing steps are performed to clean and dissociate the lipoaspirate, and a pellet containing an enhanced fraction of stem cells is obtained by centrifuging the modified centrifugal tube. The pellet is resuspended in a fluid and administered to a human patient for a therapeutic or cosmetic purpose. According to another embodiment, the system further comprises a second modified centrifuge tube of a substantially similar design as the first modified centrifuge tube, wherein the second modified centrifuge tube is used to further process the resuspended pellet to achieve a higher concentration of stem cells.

According to another preferred embodiment of the invention, a method for preparation of adipose-derived stem cells, the method comprising the steps of: (a) removing adipose tissue from a human being using an adipose tissue extraction device; (b) performing a sterile transfer of the lipoaspirate to a modified centrifuge tube comprising a plurality of lipoaspirate inlet fittings, a plurality of processing fluid inlet fittings, and a plurality of pellet extraction tubes; (c) processing the lipoaspirate in the modified centrifuge tube by adding one or more fluids via the plurality of processing fluid fittings, the processing comprising one or more of cleaning and dissociating the lipoaspirate; (d) centrifuging the modified centrifuge tube containing processed lipoaspirate to concentrate a pellet comprising an enriched stem cell fraction; (e) resuspending the pellet in a fluid to obtain a cell mixture substantially enriched in stem cells relative to a concentration of stem cells of the original lipoaspirate; and (f) administering the resuspended cell mixture to a human being for a therapeutic or cosmetic purpose.

According to another aspect of the present application, a tissue processing device is provided. The device includes a first centrifuge tube configured to receive and process a biological substance, the first centrifuge tube having an upper cylindrical portion and a lower conical portion, a sterile tissue inlet fitting, at least one sterile processing fluid

5

inlet fitting, a sterile suction fitting, and at least one sterile extraction port connected to a first extraction tube. The first centrifuge tube further includes an internal space including a screen being positioned therein, the screen being configured to divide the internal space in half, and a filter positioned therein, the filter being positioned below the screen in the lower conical portion of the first centrifuge tube. The device also includes a second centrifuge tube configured to receive and further process the biological substance from the first centrifuge tube, the second centrifuge tube having at least one sterile fitting. The second centrifuge tube is releasably connected via the at least one sterile fitting to one of the at least one sterile extraction ports of the first centrifuge tube.

According to another embodiment, a system for processing tissue in a closed pathway for maintaining sterility is disclosed. The system includes a first centrifuge tube having an essentially cylindrical body having a top, and an inverse conical apex and an interior volume. The first centrifuge tube also includes at least two swabable valves, an extraction tube releasably affixed to one of the at least two swabable valves that extends a distance within the interior volume towards the apex, and a screen disposed within the interior volume of the body. The system also includes a second centrifuge tube comprising an essentially cylindrical body having a top, an inverse conical apex, and an interior volume. The second centrifuge tube further includes at least one swabable valve, and an extraction tube releasably affixed to the at least one swabable valve that extends a distance within the interior volume towards the apex. The second centrifuge tube is releasably connected via the at least one swabable valve to one of the at least two swabable valves of the first centrifuge tube.

In yet another embodiment, a multiple unit enabled system for processing tissue in a closed pathway for maintaining sterility is disclosed. The system includes a centrifuge tube having an essentially cylindrical body having a top, an inverse conical apex and an interior volume. The system further includes least two swabable valves, an extraction tube releasably affixed to each of the at least two swabable valves that extends a distance within the interior volume towards the apex, a screen disposed within the interior volume of the body, and a filter being positioned below the screen in the inverse conical apex of the centrifuge tube. The system also includes a container having at least one swabable valve, where the swabable valve can be releasably connected to one of the at least two swabable valves of the centrifuge tube for the sterile transfer of material contained with the closed system.

In yet another embodiment, a method for preparation of a fat graft is provided. The method includes the steps of:

(a) performing a sterile transfer of lipoaspirate to a centrifuge tube comprising an upper cylindrical portion and a lower conical portion, a sterile tissue inlet fitting, at least one sterile processing fluid inlet fitting, a sterile suction fitting, and at least one sterile extraction port connected to a first extraction tube, the centrifuge tube further comprising a screen being positioned therein, and a filter positioned therein, the filter being positioned below the screen in the lower conical portion of the first centrifuge tube;

(b) washing the lipoaspirate in the centrifuge tube by adding one or more fluids via the at least one fluid inlet fitting;

(c) centrifuging the centrifuge tube containing the lipoaspirate at a low speed to separate the contaminants and

6

dense fat fraction, where the dense fat remains on top of the screen and liquids are collected at in the lower conical portion;

(d) centrifuging the centrifuge tube containing the washed dense fat at a higher speed to force the dense fat through pores of the screen by a centrifuge force and accumulate broken fat particles in a compartment between the screen and the filter, wherein a surface of the filter surface serves as a bottom for accumulating fat particles, and wherein broken fat and debris filter down through the filter to the lower conical portion;

(e) collecting the accumulated fat graft by a syringe, and by connecting the syringe to at least one of the inlet with corresponding tubing leading to the compartment between the filter and the screen; and

(f) administering fat graft to a patient for a therapeutic or cosmetic purpose.

In yet another embodiment, a method for preparation of adipose-derived cell fraction is disclosed. The method includes the steps of:

(a) performing a sterile transfer of lipoaspirate to the first centrifuge tube of the device claimed in claim 1;

(b) processing the lipoaspirate in the first centrifuge tube by adding one or more fluids via the at least one fluid inlet fitting, the processing comprising one or more of cleaning and dissociating the lipoaspirate;

(c) centrifuging the first centrifuge tube containing processed lipoaspirate to concentrate a pellet comprising an enriched stem cell fraction;

(d) performing a sterile transfer of the concentrated pellet comprising an enriched stem cell fraction to the second centrifuge tube of the device claimed in claim 1;

(e) washing the cell fraction in the second centrifuge tube by adding one or more fluids via the at least one fluid inlet fitting;

(f) centrifuging the second centrifuge tube containing cell fraction to concentrate a pellet comprising an enriched stem cell fraction;

(g) resuspending the pellet in a fluid to obtain a cell mixture substantially enriched in stem cells relative to a concentration of stem cells of the original lipoaspirate; and

(h) administering the resuspended cell mixture to a patient for a therapeutic or cosmetic purpose.

These and other objects, features and advantages of the invention will be apparent from the detailed description that follows.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWING FIGURES

The accompanying drawings illustrate several embodiments of the invention and, together with the description, serve to explain the principles of the invention according to the embodiments. One skilled in the art will recognize that the particular embodiments illustrated in the drawings are merely exemplary, and are not intended to limit the scope of the present invention.

FIG. 1 is a diagram illustrating a modified centrifuge tube for extracting stem cells from adipose tissue, according to a preferred embodiment of the invention.

FIG. 2 is a diagram illustrated a modified centrifuge tube for extracting stem cells from adipose tissue that comprises a novel atomization means, according to a preferred embodiment of the invention.

FIG. 3 is a diagram illustrating a system for preparing mesenchymal stem cells or SVF from adipose tissue for clinical use, according to a preferred embodiment of the invention.

FIG. 4 is a method diagram of a high-level process for preparing mesenchymal stem cells or SVF from adipose tissue for clinical use, according to an embodiment of the invention.

FIG. 5 is a method diagram of a detailed process for preparing and using mesenchymal stem cells or SVF from adipose tissue in clinical applications, according to a preferred embodiment of the invention.

FIG. 6 is a diagram illustrating a centrifuge tube according to another embodiment of the invention.

FIG. 7 is an exploded view of the centrifuge tube shown in FIG. 6.

FIG. 8 is a diagram illustrating a centrifuge tube according to another embodiment of the invention.

FIG. 9 is an exploded view of the centrifuge tube shown in FIG. 8.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

The inventor has conceived, and reduced to practice, a system and various methods for preparation of adipose-derived stem cells that addresses the challenges and problems in the art outlined above. Various techniques will now be described in detail with reference to a few example embodiments thereof, as illustrated in the accompanying drawings. In the following description, numerous specific details are set forth in order to provide a thorough understanding of one or more aspects and/or features described or referenced herein. However, it will be apparent to one skilled in the art, that one or more aspects and/or features described or referenced herein may be practiced without some or all of these specific details. In other instances, well known process steps and/or structures have not been described in detail in order to not obscure some of the aspects and/or features described or reference herein.

One or more different inventions may be described in the present application. Further, for one or more of the inventions described herein, numerous alternative embodiments may be described; it should be understood that these are presented for illustrative purposes only. The described embodiments are not intended to be limiting in any sense. One or more of the inventions may be widely applicable to numerous embodiments, as is readily apparent from the disclosure. In general, embodiments are described in sufficient detail to enable those skilled in the art to practice one or more of the inventions, and it is to be understood that other embodiments may be utilized and that structural, logical, software, electrical and other changes may be made without departing from the scope of the particular inventions. Accordingly, those skilled in the art will recognize that one or more of the inventions may be practiced with various modifications and alterations. Particular features of one or more of the inventions may be described with reference to one or more particular embodiments or figures that form a part of the present disclosure, and in which are shown, by way of illustration, specific embodiments of one or more of the inventions. It should be understood, however, that such features are not limited to usage in the one or more particular embodiments or figures with reference to which they are described. The present disclosure is neither a literal description of all embodiments of one or more of the inventions nor a listing of features of one or more of the inventions that must be present in all embodiments.

Headings of sections provided in this patent application and the title of this patent application are for convenience only, and are not to be taken as limiting the disclosure in any way.

A description of an embodiment with several components in communication with each other does not imply that all such components are required. To the contrary, a variety of optional components may be described to illustrate a wide variety of possible embodiments of one or more of the inventions and in order to more fully illustrate one or more aspects of the inventions. Similarly, although process steps, method steps, algorithms or the like may be described in a sequential order, such processes, methods and algorithms may generally be configured to work in alternate orders, unless specifically stated to the contrary. In other words, any sequence or order of steps that may be described in this patent application does not, in and of itself, indicate a requirement that the steps be performed in that order. The steps of described processes may be performed in any order practical. Further, some steps may be performed simultaneously despite being described or implied as occurring non-simultaneously (e.g., because one step is described after the other step). Moreover, the illustration of a process by its depiction in a drawing does not imply that the illustrated process is exclusive of other variations and modifications thereto, does not imply that the illustrated process or any of its steps are necessary to one or more of the invention(s), and does not imply that the illustrated process is preferred. Also, steps are generally described once per embodiment, but this does not mean they must occur once, or that they may only occur once each time a process, method, or algorithm is carried out or executed. Some steps may be omitted in some embodiments or some occurrences, or some steps may be executed more than once in a given embodiment or occurrence.

When a single device or article is described, it will be readily apparent that more than one device or article may be used in place of a single device or article. Similarly, where more than one device or article is described, it will be readily apparent that a single device or article may be used in place of the more than one device or article.

The functionality or the features of a device may be alternatively embodied by one or more other devices that are not explicitly described as having such functionality or features. Thus, other embodiments of one or more of the inventions need not include the device itself.

Techniques and mechanisms described or referenced herein will sometimes be described in singular form for clarity. However, it should be noted that particular embodiments include multiple iterations of a technique or multiple instantiations of a mechanism unless noted otherwise. Process descriptions or blocks in figures should be understood as representing modules, segments, or portions of code which include one or more executable instructions for implementing specific logical functions or steps in the process. Alternate implementations are included within the scope of embodiments of the present invention in which, for example, functions may be executed out of order from that shown or discussed, including substantially concurrently or in reverse order, depending on the functionality involved, as would be understood by those having ordinary skill in the art.

Any feature or combination of features described herein are included within the scope of the present invention provided that the features included in any such combination are not mutually inconsistent as will be apparent from the context, this specification, and the knowledge of one of

ordinary skill in the art. For purposes of summarizing the present invention, certain aspects, advantages and novel features of the present invention have been described herein. Of course, it is to be understood that not necessarily all such aspects, advantages, or features will be embodied in any particular embodiment of the present invention. Additional advantages and aspects of the present invention are apparent in the following detailed description and claims.

A number of publications and patents have been cited herein. Each of the cited publications and patents is hereby incorporated by reference in their entireties. All publications, patents, and patent applications referenced herein are incorporated by reference in their entirety to the same extent as if each individual publication, patent or patent application was specifically and individually indicated as incorporated by reference in its entirety.

Definitions

As used herein, “unit of adipose tissue” refers to a discrete or measurable amount of adipose tissue. A unit of adipose tissue may be measured by determining the weight and/or volume of the unit. Based on the data identified above, a unit of processed lipoaspirate, as removed from a patient, has a cellular component in which at least 0.1% of the cellular component is stem cells. In reference to the disclosure herein, a unit of adipose tissue may refer to the entire amount of adipose tissue removed from a patient, or an amount that is less than the entire amount of adipose tissue removed from a patient. Thus, a unit of adipose tissue may be combined with another unit of adipose tissue to form a unit of adipose tissue that has a weight or volume that is the sum of the individual units.

As used herein, “portion” refers to an amount of a material that is less than a whole. A minor portion refers to an amount that is less than 50%, and a major portion refers to an amount greater than 50%. Thus, a unit of adipose tissue that is less than the entire amount of adipose tissue removed from a patient is a portion of the removed adipose tissue.

As used herein, “stem cell” refers to a multipotent cell with the potential to differentiate into a variety of other cell types, which perform one or more specific functions and have the ability to self-renew. Some of the stem cells disclosed herein may be pluripotent.

As used herein, “processed lipoaspirate” (PLA) refers to adipose tissue that has been processed to separate the active cellular component (e.g., the component containing stem cells) from the mature adipocytes and connective tissue. Typically, PLA refers to the pellet of cells obtained by washing and separating the cells from the adipose tissue. The pellet is typically obtained by centrifuging a suspension of cells so that the cells aggregate at the bottom of a centrifuge container.

As used herein the term “prophylactically or therapeutically effective amount” refers to the amount of cells of the invention contained in the pharmaceutical composition that is capable of producing the desired therapeutic effect. One of skill in the art will recognize that cell numbers (e.g., dosage amount) will vary depending upon multiple factors including, but not limited to site of administration, extent of disease, and method of administration. Experience with transplant of hematopoietic stem cells (bone marrow or umbilical cord blood-derived stem cells used to regenerate the recipient’s blood cell-forming capacity) shows that engraftment is cell dose-dependent with threshold effects. Thus, it is likely that the general principle that “more is better” will be applied within the limits set by other variables

and that where feasible the harvest will collect as much tissue as possible. The dose of cells disclosed herein can be repeated, depending on the patient’s condition and reaction, at time intervals of days, weeks or months as determined necessary by a treating physician or other healthcare professional.

The term “pharmaceutically acceptable vehicle” refers to a composition approved by a regulatory agency of the Federal or a state government or listed in the U.S. Pharmacopeia, or

European Pharmacopeia or other generally recognized pharmacopeia for use in animals, including humans. The term “vehicle” refers to a diluent, adjuvant, excipient, or carrier with which the cells of the invention are administered, thus, the vehicle must be compatible with the cells. The pharmaceutical compositions of the invention, if desired, can also contain, when necessary, additives to enhance, control, or otherwise direct the intended therapeutic effect of the cells comprising said pharmaceutical composition, and/or auxiliary substances or pharmaceutically acceptable substances, such as minor amounts of pH buffering agents, tensioactives, co-solvents, preservatives, etc. Also, for stabilizing the cell suspension, it is possible to add metal chelating agents. The stability of the cells in the liquid medium of the pharmaceutical composition of the invention can be improved by means of adding additional substances, such as, for example, amino acids such as aspartic acid, glutamic acid, etc. Pharmaceutically acceptable substances that can be used in the pharmaceutical composition of the invention are known, in general, by the skilled person in the art and are normally used in the manufacture of cellular compositions. Examples of suitable pharmaceutical vehicles are described in “Remington’s Pharmaceutical Sciences” by E. W. Martin. Illustrative, non-limiting, examples of vehicles for the administration of cells contained in a pharmaceutical composition of the invention include, for example, a sterile saline solution (0.9% NaCl), PBS, etc.

A number of devices have been developed for harvesting and processing cells from adipose tissue, but these devices can suffer from one or more problems which have precluded wide spread adoption. These problems include difficulty of use, and cost. Thus, there is need for alternate approaches in which a population of active cells with increased yield, consistency and/or purity can be prepared rapidly and reliably, and whereby the need for post-extraction manipulation of the cells can be reduced or eliminated. Ideally this cell population would be obtained in a manner that is suitable for their direct placement into a recipient.

Reference will now be made in detail to the presently preferred embodiments of the invention. Wherever possible, the same or similar reference numbers are used in the drawings and the description to refer to the same or like parts. It should be noted that the drawings are in simplified form and are not to precise scale. In reference to the disclosure herein, for purposes of convenience and clarity only, directional terms, such as, top, bottom, left, right, up, down, over, above, below, beneath, rear, and front, are used with respect to the accompanying drawings. Such directional terms should not be construed to limit the scope of the invention in any manner.

Although the disclosure herein refers to certain illustrated embodiments, it is to be understood that these embodiments are presented by way of example and not by way of limitation. The intent of the following detailed description, although discussing exemplary embodiments, is to be construed to cover all modifications, alternatives, and equivalents of the embodiments as may fall within the spirit and

scope of the invention as defined by the appended claims. The present invention may be practiced in conjunction with various cell or tissue separation techniques that are conventionally used in the art, and only so much of the commonly practiced process steps are included herein as are necessary to provide an understanding of the present invention.

System for Extracting and Processing Adipose Tissue

Various embodiments of the present invention are directed to a system **300** for obtaining fraction of adipose-derived mesenchymal stem cells or SVF in clinical environment and also to compositions, methods, and systems for using stem cells derived from adipose tissue by placing them directly into a recipient along with additives useful to promote, engender, or support a therapeutic, structural, or cosmetic benefit. In various embodiments, the invention provides a system **300** for extracting and processing adipose tissue to generate a therapeutically effective amount of adipose-derived stem cells for re-introduction into a patient, wherein the system is a simple-to-operate, low-cost system suitable for small and mid-size medical clinics of multidisciplinary specialization.

In a preferred embodiment of the invention, illustrated in FIG. **1**, a modified centrifuge tube **100**, used in conjunction with various accessories known in the art, are comprised in a system or kit that allows for small physician practices as well as surgical centers to employ affordable methods for safe extraction of mesenchymal stem cells (MSCs) or SVF from adipose tissue of any patient or donor for use directly in treatment or for cryostorage (banking). The kit is comprised of centrifuge tube **100** and various other components and may be used to carry out secure, sterile, and closed processes for aspiration of small samples of adipose tissue, components for on-site processing and purification of MSC fractions or SVF, and components for quality assessment. The kit, including centrifuge tube **100**, is generally operable by a laboratory technician or similarly qualified person, following simple method steps that are described in detail below and that may be taught in appropriate training.

Centrifuge tube **100** maintains a closed, sterile fluid/tissue pathway, receiving adipose tissue samples, and providing as an output more or less enriched samples of mesenchymal stem cells or SVF, as desired. This is achieved by use of a kit of sterile containers and tubing, which allows for transfer of tissue and fluid elements within a closed pathway. A series of processing reagents (e.g., saline, enzymes, etc.) may also be provided in prepackaged form for introduction into centrifuge tube **100** to allow simple control of the addition of reagents, as well as the temperature and timing of processing, thus simplifying process management by operators. In a preferred embodiment, the entire procedure from tissue extraction through processing and placement into the recipient is performed in a single facility (indeed, even within a single room, such as preferably the room of a patient undergoing a procedure that uses MSCs obtained via the invention).

Tube **100** comprises a main body of conventional design and encompassing an inner volume **160**, typically available in various sizes from about 10 ml to as much as 500 ml, and adapted to be used in standard centrifuges equipped to use tubes of the conventional geometry shown in FIG. **1** (although any suitable centrifuge tube geometry known in the art and compatible with centrifuges available in the art may be used, according to the invention).

In an embodiment, the kit or system comprises three principal components: (1) a permanent set of equipment, all of which is known in the art: aspiration pump, shaker, centrifuge and mini-incubator; (2) a plurality of single-use

disposable equipment items: aspiration needle/cannula, collection bag, syringes, filters, flasks, and centrifuge tubes **100**; and (3) various processing solutions/reagents. The components are preferably adapted to cooperate with one another in order to facilitate extraction and processing of adipose tissue to obtain MSCs, while maintaining sterility and simplifying the process. Tube **100** is provided with a cap **150** that is penetrated by several openings **115**, **120**, **121**, and **122**, and a separate fitting **110** mounted generally on a top portion of tube **100** near cap **150** (in fact, it should be appreciated by one having ordinary skill in the art that the various fittings, while all affixed to the upper portion of tube **100**, may be arranged variously, with some, all, or none of the fittings passing through cap **150**, and in fact cap **150** could optionally be omitted in favor of a tube **100** of unitary construction, which may be disposed of after use). Fitting **120** is penetrated by tube **129**, which is fitted with a sterile fitting **125** (such as a luer lock), to allow various reagents or other fluids to be introduced via tube **129** without violating sterile conditions within tube **100**. Typically, a sterile syringe is used to add fluids to tube **100** via tube **129**. Tubes **130** and **131** penetrate through cap **150** at fittings **121** and **122** respectively, and are provided with sterile fittings **126** and **127**, so that cells or other materials contained in a pellet at the bottom (the point of the inverted cone that makes up the lower portion of tube **100** after centrifuging (the creation of pellets of matter of relatively higher specific gravity during centrifuging is well known in the art). Fittings **126** and **127** may be of any type, such as a luer lock, known in the art and suitable for establishing a sterile connection between tubes **130**, **131** and a syringe or other device capable of applying suction to remove cells from a pellet at the bottom of tube **100**. Fitting **115** is penetrated by tube **116**, which is fitted with a sterile fitting **117** at its end, and may be used to apply suction from the upper portion of tube **100** to establish a vacuum within tube **100** (for example, to facilitate rapid introduction of lipoaspirate into tube **100** through fitting **110**). Fitting **110** is connected via a short tube or stub to fitting **111**, which (like all the other fittings passing into tube **100**) is suitable to maintaining sterile conditions within tube **100** at all times. Fitting **110** is generally used to inject lipoaspirate into tube **100** as an initial step of a process of extracting and potentially purifying or concentrating MSCs from the lipoaspirate into a pellet that can be withdrawn via either of tubes **130** and **131**. In a preferred embodiment, two tubes **131**, **131** are provided to ensure that pellet extraction will be possible even if one of the tubes becomes clogged.

FIG. **2** illustrates a modified centrifuge tube **200** for extracting stem cells from adipose tissue that comprises a novel atomization means, according to an embodiment of the invention. It will be recognized by one having ordinary skill in the art that tube **200** is very similar to tube **100**, but provides more illustrative detail regarding fitting **125-127**. Tube **116** also is terminated in a secure way to a vacuum pump **220** (details of the sterile connection between tube **116** and pump **220** are not shown, but are well known in the art). Vacuum pump may be provided, already sterilely connected to tube **116**, as a component of a portable kit for MSC isolation from lipoaspirate, or more commonly it may be connected as needed to tube **116** during performance of a process for MSC extraction from a lipoaspirate. In general, it is a goal of the invention to facilitate the rapid breakdown of lipoaspirate as it enters tube **100** into small droplets so that breakdown of adipose tissue and washing of cells (without damaging them) may take place efficiently without requiring special equipment. Thus, in some embodiments, a turbo or screen **210** may be provided, which comprises a

plurality of holes **211** through which lipoaspirate must pass when entering tube **100** through fitting **110**; the presence of holes **211** helps to break down clumps of adipose tissues that make up at least part of the entering lipoaspirate. It should be noted that lipoaspirate may be drawn into tube **100** using a vacuum provided by pump **220** or another means of drawing suction through tube **116**, or by direct injection of lipoaspirate (such as with a plunger-type syringe) through fitting **110**. Either way, as lipoaspirate is forced through fitting **110** and then holes **211**, it is broken up into small droplets or small clumps of cells and tissue fragments, which are more readily washed and otherwise processed according to methods described elsewhere herein (for example, with reference to FIG. 4).

FIG. 3 is a diagram illustrating a system **300** for preparing mesenchymal stem cells or SVF from adipose tissue for clinical use, according to an embodiment of the invention.

According to the embodiment, a kit comprising various components, as described above, is provided to allow extraction of adipose tissue from a patient **301** (although a non-patient donor may also provide adipose tissue, according to the embodiment, using system **300**). Adipose tissue may, as discussed above, be obtained in a number of ways known in the art. According to an exemplary embodiment, as shown in FIG. 3, system **300** comprises a syringe **302** and a sterile, sealed bag **303** for use in obtaining adipose tissue from patient **301**. Syringe **302** may be of any conventional type known in the art that is suitable for use in withdrawing, via manual suction, varying amounts of adipose tissue, typically from 1 to a few hundred milliliters. Various kits according to system **300** may provide one or more means for dissociating adipose tissues, such as ultrasonic chamber **305**. Adipose tissue may be placed in ultrasonic chamber **305** while still in sterile bag **303**, or it may be passed through ultrasonic chamber **305** via a sterile tube, as shown. System **300** typically comprises at least one medium size (about 100 milliliters) modified centrifuge tube **310** (such as those described above with reference to FIGS. 1 and 2). Adipose tissue may be drawn into tube **310** by application of a vacuum **350** to an inner region **340-341** of tube **310**, or by injection from a syringe directly or via a sterile tube. Lipoaspirate is generally admitted via a turbo or screen **210** perforated by a plurality of holes **211**, which as described above serves to assist in breaking down incoming adipose tissue samples into small droplets that are more amenable to efficient processing within tube **310**. Once a sample of lipoaspirate has been placed inside tube **310**, a plurality of washing agents **320** or reagents **321** (for example, reagents that assist in tissue dissociation) may be injected from sterile containers provided as part of a kit of system **300** via one or more sterile fittings (such as those shown in FIGS. 1 and 2, for example fitting **125**). As described above, tube **310** is adapted for easy use within a centrifuge (which may be provided as part of a kit of system **300**, or which alternatively may be a standard desktop or other centrifuge present in a location where system **300** is to be used; centrifuges are well known in the art and are generally readily available in a wide range of medical facilities), so lipoaspirates in tube **310** may be easily centrifuged in order for example to separate stem cells from other cell or tissue fractions. Tube **310** is generally provided with one or more fittings **330**, **331** for removal of separated stem cells or other cells or material contained in a pellet at the apex of conical section **340** of tube **310**. Examples of such fittings **330**, **331** are shown in FIGS. 1 and 2 (that is, fittings **126** and **127**, which draw pelletized material from tubes **130** and **131**, respectively). In some embodiments, lipoaspirate treated in tube **310** (by any

of washing, dissociating, and centrifuging) is administered directly to patient **301**; in other embodiments, system **300** may comprise a second, generally smaller tube **360** that may be used to further process lipoaspirate after its removal from tube **310**. For example, a partially enriched lipoaspirate (that is, a processed lipoaspirate with a higher stem cell fraction than was present when the lipoaspirate was initially drawn from patient or donor **301**) may be injected (or drawn by vacuum **350**) into tube **360**, which may be for example of a volume of 10 to 20 milliliters (although other volumes may be used, including the same or a greater volume as that of tube **310**; the relative sizes shown and described are merely exemplary and should not be taken as limiting, particularly as various treatment protocols may require different specific tube sizes). Thus system **300** shown in FIG. 3 is exemplary, and shows a variety of apparatus that may be comprised, along with various reagents and washing agents in sterile containers for use as needed, in a kit suitable for use in a single treatment in which lipoaspirate is drawn from a patient **301**, processed in a portable, continuous sterile environment comprised of elements of system **300** delivered as a kit, and administered without requiring stem cell culturing or differentiation to the same or another patient **301**. It will be appreciated that, in some embodiments, it may be desirable to differentiate a stem cell fraction obtained using system **300** using techniques known in the art, for example to obtain and then culture precursor osteocytes or other precursor cell types differentiable from mesenchymal stem cells or SVF obtained according to the invention.

Methods for Extracting and Processing Adipose Tissue

In practicing the methods disclosed herein, cells (such as mesenchymal stem cells or SVF) that are intended for administration to a patient **301** may be obtained from adipose tissue. Adipose tissue may be obtained by various methods known to a person of ordinary skill in the art. For example, adipose tissue may be removed from a patient by suction-assisted lipoplasty, ultrasound-assisted lipoplasty, and excisionallipectomy. In addition, the procedures may include a combination of such procedures, such as a combination of excisionallipectomy and suction-assisted lipoplasty. As the tissue or some fraction thereof is intended for reimplantation into a patient the adipose tissue should be collected in a manner that preserves the viability of the cellular component and that minimizes the likelihood of contamination of the tissue with potentially infectious organisms, such as bacteria and/or viruses. Thus, tissue extraction should preferably be performed in a sterile or aseptic manner to minimize contamination.

FIG. 4 is a method diagram of a high-level process **400** for preparing mesenchymal stem cells or SVF from adipose tissue for clinical use, according to an embodiment of the invention.

According to the embodiment, in step **401** a disposable tissue removal system is provided as a component of a sterile kit intended for obtaining processed stem cell-rich lip aspirates (for example, a syringe **302**). Then, in step **402**, a technician, physician, or other professional removes adipose tissue from a patient (or donor), the adipose tissue having an initial concentration of stem cells (particularly MSCs). For suction-assisted lipoplastic procedures, adipose tissue may be collected by insertion of a cannula into or near an adipose tissue deposit present in a patient **301**, followed by aspiration of adipose tissue into a suction device. In one embodiment, a small cannula may be coupled to a syringe **302**, and adipose tissue may be aspirated using manual force. Using a syringe **302** or other similar device may be desirable to

harvest relatively small to moderate amounts of adipose tissue (e.g., from 0.1 ml to several hundred milliliters of adipose tissue).

Suction-assisted lipoplasty may be desirable to remove adipose tissue from a patient **301**, as it provides a minimally invasive method of collecting tissue with a correspondingly minimal potential for stem cell damage. Moreover, widespread use of liposuction procedures in the art has led to development of well-established and safe techniques for removal of significant amounts of adipose tissue from donors or patients. In a preferred embodiment, the system includes a single-use disposable aspiration system, which allows extraction of adipose tissue into a sterile sealed bag for further processing. Preferably the system employs a relatively small device such as a small syringe **302**, with the concomitant advantage that lipoaspiration may be performed with only local (or even no) anesthesia, as opposed to general anesthesia.

Adipose tissue removed from a patient may be collected into a sterile container (such as sterile sealed container **303**) for further processing. As discussed herein, and in one embodiment, a device is designed for and dedicated to the purpose of collecting tissue for manufacture of a processed adipose tissue cell population, which includes stem cells and/or endothelial precursor cells. In a preferred embodiment, the device is a single-use disposable aspiration system that extracts adipose tissue from a patient into a sterile sealed bag **303**. In alternative embodiments, the device may be any conventional device that is typically used for tissue collection by physicians performing the extraction procedure.

Because only small amounts of adipose tissue are typically required, the utility of this invention is not limited to individuals with large amounts of adipose tissue. The amount of tissue to be collected will be dependent on a number of variables including, but not limited to, donor body mass index, availability of accessible adipose tissue harvest sites, concomitant and pre-existing medications and conditions (such as anticoagulant therapy), and the clinical purpose for which adipose tissue is being collected. Moreover, stem cell concentrations present in lipoaspirates vary widely from individual to individual, so that, when a specific amount of stem cells are required, more or less volume of adipose tissue may be required to obtain a specific desired amount. For example, concentration of stem cells in tissue extracted from a lean individual will typically be greater than that extracted from an obese donor (this reflects a typical dilutive effect of increased fat content in adipose tissue in obese individuals).

A preferred method to obtain human adipose tissue is by excision or liposuction procedures well known in the art. Pluripotent cells of the invention are present in an initially excised or extracted adipose tissue, regardless of the method by which the adipose tissue is obtained. Adipose tissue may then be processed to facilitate separation/concentration of stem cells. For example, pluripotent cells may be obtained by washing collected adipose tissue with a physiologically-compatible solution, such as phosphate buffer saline (PBS). Typically, a washing step consists of rinsing a sample of adipose tissue with PBS or Lactated Ringer Solution, agitating or centrifuging the sample, and allowing the tissue in the sample to be separated from fluid. In addition to washing, adipose tissue may be dissociated. Dissociation may occur by enzyme degradation (e.g., collagenase, trypsin treatment). Alternatively, or in conjunction with such enzymatic treatment, other dissociation methods may be used, such as mechanical agitation, sonic or ultrasonic energy, or thermal energy. Cells may then be centrifuged, and the

resulting pellet (containing pluripotent cells) may be further treated after resuspension in an appropriate solution (e.g., PBS).

In step **403**, at least part of the adipose tissue obtained in step **402** is processed (as described above, for example) to obtain a higher concentration of stem cells, and in step **404** the processed stem cells are administered to a patient **301** from a sterile container that may be provided in a kit of system **300** or may be available in a medical facility. Pluripotent cells in a resuspended pellet can be separated from other cells of the resuspended pellet by methods that include, but are not limited to, cell sorting, size fractionation, granularity, density, molecularly, morphologically, and immuno-histologically (e.g., by panning, using magnetic beads, fluorescence-activated cell sorting/FACS, magnetically activated cell sorting/MACS, or affinity chromatography). In some immunologically based methods of cell isolation, a pluripotent cell may be obtained by positive selection, via use of an antibody or other specific-binding protein, which binds to an epitope on the cell surface. In such methods, recovery of cells from antibodies to which they have adhered may be performed by one or more washes with suitable buffers, as is known to one skilled in the art. Alternatively, pluripotent cells may be isolated by negative selection. According to various embodiments of the present invention, stem cell collection kits may comprise sterile containers and/or reagents to facilitate separation or concentration of stem cells in a lipoaspirate sample. The presence of pluripotent cells is preferably assessed prior to reintroduction using, for example, specific cell surface markers and/or counting techniques known in the art.

Pluripotent cells obtained using system **300** of the present invention will typically be introduced (or reintroduced) to a patient without expansion or differentiation. However, in some embodiments, pluripotent cells may be expanded and or differentiated in vitro. That is, after isolation, pluripotent cells may be maintained and allowed to proliferate in a culture medium. Pluripotent cells may be induced to differentiate (or to phenotypically change) into a desired cell type using techniques known in the art. It is within the skill of one in the art to modify or modulate concentrations of media and/or media supplements as necessary for the cells used. In another embodiment, pluripotent cells of the invention may be expanded in a culture medium of definite composition, in which serum is replaced by a combination of serum albumin, serum transferrin, selenium, and recombinant proteins including, but not limited to: insulin, platelet-derived growth factor (PDGF), and basic fibroblast growth factor (bFGF), as known in the art. Maintenance conditions of pluripotent cell population(s) of the invention may also comprise one or more cellular factors that allow cells to remain in an undifferentiated form.

If differentiation of pluripotent cells is desirable, one or more additional substances may be added to a culture to induce a specific desired phenotypic change. Such substances may comprise one or more activators of intracellular signaling pathways (e.g., mitogen-activated protein kinases and SMADs), activators of transcription factors (e.g., sox9, L-sox5, and L-sox6), activators of production and interaction with extracellular matrix proteins (e.g., collagen II, aggrecan, and cartilage oligomeric matrix protein), growth factors, cytokines, chemokines, hormones, and environmental factors (e.g., oxygen tension).

FIG. **5** is a method diagram of a detailed process **500** for preparing and using mesenchymal stem cells or SVF from adipose tissue in clinical applications, according to a preferred embodiment of the invention. According to the

embodiment, in step 501 adipose tissue is removed from a donor or patient 301. In step 502, lipoaspirate is injected or drawn by vacuum 350 in a modified centrifuge tube 310. Optionally, in step 503 the extracted lipoaspirate may be washed using washing agents known in the art, such as PBS. In step 504 lipoaspirate may optionally be dissociated to break down adipose tissues and cell clumps, in order to facilitate subsequent processing. In step 505, the cells or lipoaspirate may be centrifuged to separate cell and tissue fractions with varying specific gravities. For example, in a suitably prepared lipoaspirate, MSCs may be formed into a pellet at the apex of conical volume 340 of tube 310 and thus be isolated to an appreciable extent from lighter cells or tissue fragments. In many cases, a pellet produced as a result of step 505 may have a slightly enriched stem cell concentration (relative to the concentration of stem cells present in lipoaspirate as it was extracted from the donor or patient in step 501), and further enrichment may be desired. In step 506, a stem cell rich pellet may be resuspended in an appropriate solution for further treatment (including potentially repeating of steps 502 through 505). In step 507 stem cells may optionally be further segregated from other cell fractions using techniques known in the art. Pluripotent cells in a resuspended pellet can be separated from other cells of the resuspended pellet by methods that include, but are not limited to, cell sorting, size fractionation, granularity, density, molecularly, morphologically, and immuno-histologically (e.g., by panning, using magnetic beads, fluorescence-activated cell sorting/FACS, magnetically activated cell sorting/MACS, or affinity chromatography). In some immunologically based methods of cell isolation, a pluripotent cell may be obtained by positive selection, via use of an antibody or other specific-binding protein, which binds to an epitope on the cell surface. In such methods, recovery of cells from antibodies to which they have adhered may be performed by one or more washes with suitable buffers, as is known to one skilled in the art. Alternatively, pluripotent cells may be isolated by negative selection. In step 508, the concentration of stem cells in a processed lipoaspirate sample may be determined using any of various means known in the art. The presence of pluripotent cells is preferably assessed prior to reintroduction using, for example, specific cell surface markers and/or counting techniques known in the art. In step 509, a determination may be made, based at least in part on the concentration determined in step 508, as to whether further processing of a lipoaspirate to further concentrate it (that is, to make the concentration of stem cells higher), and if so such further processing may be undertaken through repetition of one or more of steps 502 through 508. In step 510, stem cells may optionally be cultured to obtain a larger quantity of stem cells, using techniques well established in the art.

Similarly, in step 511 (which may be performed either before or after, or indeed concurrently with, step 510), pluripotent stem cells may be differentiated into one or more types of precursor cell types using techniques known in the art. Finally, in step 512 stem cells or precursor cells extracted and processed as described above with reference to steps 501 through 511 may be administered to one or more patients 301, or banked for later use in therapeutic, cosmetic, or other applications.

FIGS. 6 and 7 show another embodiment of a centrifuge tube 600 which may be used as an injectable fat graft preparation tool or as a cell fraction harvest tool as mentioned above. The centrifuge tube 600 includes a body 602 having an inner volume 604. The body 600 includes a generally cylindrical portion 601 and a generally conical

portion 603. The centrifuge tube 600 further includes a cap 606 which is secured to the tube by a cap ring 608 by a fastening mechanism 609. Although screw threads are shown as the fastening mechanism in FIG. 6, it should be understood that any suitable fastening mechanism could be used to secure the cap ring to the tube 600.

The cap 606 includes a plurality of openings 607 (shown in FIG. 7). Each opening may include a fitting which may be a swabable valve 610 connected thereto. The swabable valves 610 are similar to the fittings 125-127 described above, and allow for the sterile extraction of a sample from the body 602. For example, the swabable valves 610 may include at least one sterile tissue inlet fitting, at least one sterile processing fluid inlet fitting, at least one sterile suction fitting, and at least one sterile extraction port. The valves 610 also allow for the extraction and introduction of reagents to/from the body 602. In other embodiments, additional or less swabable valves 610 may be present.

The centrifuge tube 600 also includes a plurality of tubes 612, which are similar to tubes 130, 131 as described above, and provide a passageway for removal of a sample out of the body 602.

The centrifuge tube 600 further includes a mixing ring 614 located within the inner volume which facilitates homogenization of the fat before centrifugation, and also traps the threads of connective tissue during enzymatic digestion. The latter prevents clotting of the screen 616 and filter 618 (described below) by these residuals.

A screen 616 is positioned below the mixing ring 614. In one embodiment, the screen 616 is configured to divide the internal volume 604 of the body 602 in half, and to provide support for viscous tissue introduced into the container 600. In some embodiments, the screen 616 has a plurality of pores 617 sized at about 1 mm, thereby allowing liquids to be washed down while dense fraction remains on top. The screen 616 also serves to break down the tissue into small particles smaller than 1 mm, such as when g force applied during centrifugation.

The centrifuge tube 600 further includes a filter 618 positioned below the screen 616 within the lower conical portion of the internal volume 604. The filter 618 serves as a collection platform for tissue substance that breaks through past the screen 616. The filter 18 may also include tubes 619 extending therefrom that are configured to connect to tubes 612 within the body 602.

In some embodiments, the filter 618 includes pores of about 100 microns. Therefore the tissue, upon centrifugation, is squeezed through the screen and collected on top of the filter surface, while liquid fraction moves down to the bottom of the tube 600. Thus, this "micronized" tissue (usually fat) could be collected from the compartment between the screen 616 and the filter 618 in the middle part of the body 602. The proper tubing is connected to the top cap inlets. That way the device serves as injectable fat graft preparation tool.

If digestive enzymes are applied to the fat tissue, then stromal cell fraction is separated. The cells of size under 100 microns may be collected by centrifugation through the filter 618 at the bottom of the conical section 603. Thus, the filter 618 allows for separation and purification of particular cell fraction out of digested tissue.

Both fat graft and cell fraction, collected from the centrifuge tube 600, may then further be washed and concentrated in a second, smaller centrifuge tube 700, shown in FIGS. 8-9. In some embodiments, the centrifuge tube 700 may be similar to centrifuge tube 360, as described above. Centrifuge tube 700 may include a body 702 having an

internal volume of about 50 ml, for example. The tube **700** may further include a cap **704** having a plurality of openings **706**, which may be swabable valves or fittings as described above. The centrifuge tube **700** also includes one or more tubes **708**, which are similar to tubes **130**, **131**, **612** as described above, and provide a passageway for removal of a sample out of the body **702**.

In one embodiment, the second tube **700** maybe continuously connected to the tube **600** by applying negative pressure by a pump or syringe. Alternatively, the material collected by the first tube **600** may be transferred to the second tube **700** by direct collection from the first tube **600** into a syringe, and then releasing the material into the second tube **700**, where the material is washed and concentrated by centrifugation. The final product is collected through corresponding inlet mounted on the top of the second centrifuge tube **700**, similarly to the ones in the tube **600**. In some embodiments, the second centrifuge tube **700** is not used for fat graft preparation.

In some embodiments, a method for preparation of a fat graft is disclosed. The method includes performing a sterile transfer of lipoaspirate to the first centrifuge tube **600**. Next, the lipoaspirate is washed in the first centrifuge tube **600** by adding one or more fluids via at least one fluid inlet fitting or swabable valve **610**. Then the first centrifuge tube **600** containing the lipoaspirate is centrifuged at low speed to separate the contaminants and dense fat fraction. The dense fat remains on top of the screen **616**, and liquids are collected in the lower conical portion **603**. The first centrifuge tube **600** containing the washed dense fat is then centrifuged at a higher speed to pass the dense fat through the pores of the screen **616** by centrifuge force, and accumulate broken fat particles (fat graft) in the compartment between the screen **616** and the filter **618**. The filter surface serves as a bottom for accumulating fat particles, and broken fat (oil) and debris are filtered down through the filter **618** to the lower conical portion **603**. The accumulated fat graft can then be collected by a syringe, by attaching the syringe to at least one of the inlets or swabable valves **610** with corresponding tubing leading to the intermediate compartment between the filter **618** and the screen **616**. Lastly, the fat graft may be administered to a patient for a therapeutic or cosmetic purpose.

Thus, the system of FIGS. **6** and **7** bears dual function, allowing for either fat graft preparation or cell fraction harvest. Similar to the systems disclosed above, the process is performed in a completely closed and sterile manner, while being transparent and flexible for the user. In some embodiments, the system of FIGS. **6** and **7** may be used with the tube **700** shown in FIGS. **8-9**.

Means for Re-Introducing Adipose-Derived Stem Cells

Kits according to system **300** of the present invention may be used to generate a pharmaceutical composition that contains a prophylactically or therapeutically effective amount of mesenchymal stem cells or SVF of the invention, preferably in a substantially purified form, together with a suitable vehicle in appropriate amounts, in order to provide stem cells in a form suitable for safe and efficacious administration to a patient.

Patients undergoing treatment in accordance with various embodiments of the invention may receive different concentrations of stem cells than other treatments employing adipose tissue or stem cells derived from adipose tissue. Thus, adipose tissue that is removed from a patient may be processed to change the concentration of stem cells that are administered to a patient. In a preferred embodiment of the invention, patients receive a higher concentration of stem

cells than the concentration of stem cells typically present in adipose tissue transplants and other similar stem cell based therapies. The concentrated stem cells may be administered in a composition comprising adipose-derived stem cells and/or endothelial precursor cells substantially free from mature adipocytes and connective tissue, or, as another example, the concentrated stem cells may be administered in a composition comprising a unit of adipose tissue with an increased amount of stem cells.

The pharmaceutical composition of the invention may be formulated according to a specific chosen form of administration. For example, a pharmaceutical composition may be prepared in a liquid dosage form, e.g., as a suspension, to be injected into a subject in need of treatment. Illustrative (non-limiting) examples include formulating the pharmaceutical composition of the invention in a sterile suspension with a pharmaceutically acceptable vehicle, such as saline solution, phosphate buffered saline solution (PBS), or any other suitable pharmaceutically acceptable carrier, for administration to a subject, e.g., a human being, preferably via intravenous, intraperitoneal, subcutaneous, etc., although further administration routes may be also possible.

The administration of a pharmaceutical composition to a subject in need thereof can be carried out by conventional means, according to the invention. In a particular embodiment, a pharmaceutical composition may be administered to a subject in need by intravenous administration using devices such as syringes, catheters, trocars, cannulas, etc. In any case, a pharmaceutical composition of the invention may be administered using any appropriate equipment, apparatus, and devices known to persons having ordinary skill in the art. In preferred embodiments, a device for administering a pharmaceutical composition is provided as part of a kit described above, or is adapted for use with a kit described above to facilitate transfer of a pharmaceutical composition to a subject without contamination.

The foregoing description of preferred embodiments of the present invention has been provided for the purposes of illustration and description. It is not intended to be exhaustive or to limit the invention to the precise forms disclosed. Many embodiments were chosen and described in order to best explain the principles of the invention and its practical application, thereby enabling others skilled in the art to understand the invention for various embodiments and with various modifications that are suited to the particular use contemplated. It is intended that the scope of the invention be defined by the claims and their equivalents.

The skilled person will be aware of a range of possible modifications of the various embodiments described above. Accordingly, the present invention is defined by the claims and their equivalents.

What is claimed is:

1. A tissue processing device comprising:

a first centrifuge tube configured to receive and process a biological substance, the first centrifuge tube comprising an upper cylindrical portion and a lower conical portion, a sterile tissue inlet fitting, at least one sterile processing fluid inlet fitting, a sterile suction fitting, and at least one sterile extraction port connected to a first extraction tube;

wherein the first centrifuge tube further comprises an internal space including a screen being positioned therein, the screen being configured to divide the internal space, and a filter positioned therein, the filter being positioned below the screen in the lower conical portion of the first centrifuge tube; and

21

- a second centrifuge tube configured to receive and further process the biological substance from the first centrifuge tube, the second centrifuge tube comprising at least one sterile fitting, wherein the second centrifuge tube is releasably connected via the at least one sterile fitting to one of the at least one sterile extraction ports of the first centrifuge tube.
2. The device of claim 1, wherein the first centrifuge tube has a top and an apex; and
wherein the sterile tissue inlet fitting, the at least one sterile processing fluid inlet fitting, the sterile suction fitting, and the at least one sterile extraction port are located adjacent the top of the first centrifuge tube.
3. The device of claim 2 wherein the first extraction tube extends a distance within the first centrifuge tube from the at least one sterile extraction port towards the apex.
4. The device of claim 2 wherein the at least one sterile processing fluid inlet fitting, the sterile suction fitting, and the at least one sterile extraction port are disposed within a cap that affixes the top of the first centrifuge tube.
5. The device of claim 1 further including a vacuum device affixed to the sterile suction fitting.
6. The device of claim 1 further comprising a mixing ring located within the upper cylindrical portion of the first centrifuge tube.
7. The device of claim 1 wherein the filter includes pores of about 100 microns.
8. The device of claim 1 wherein the device is configured to allow for either fat graft preparation or cell fraction harvest.
9. A method for preparation of adipose-derived cell fraction, the method comprising the steps of:
- performing a sterile transfer of lipoaspirate to the first centrifuge tube of the device claimed in claim 1;
 - processing the lipoaspirate in the first centrifuge tube by adding one or more fluids via the at least one sterile processing fluid inlet fitting, the processing comprising one or more of cleaning and dissociating the lipoaspirate;
 - centrifuging the first centrifuge tube containing processed lipoaspirate to concentrate a pellet comprising an enriched stem cell fraction;
 - performing a sterile transfer of the concentrated pellet comprising an enriched stem cell fraction to the second centrifuge tube of the device claimed in claim 1;
 - washing the cell fraction in the second centrifuge tube by adding one or more fluids via the at least one sterile processing fluid inlet fitting;
 - centrifuging the second centrifuge tube containing the cell fraction to concentrate a pellet comprising an enriched stem cell fraction;
 - resuspending the pellet in a fluid to obtain a cell mixture substantially enriched in stem cells relative to a concentration of stem cells of the original lipoaspirate; and
 - administering the cell mixture to a patient for a therapeutic or cosmetic purpose.
10. The device of claim 1 wherein the screen is positioned to divide the internal space in half.
11. The device of claim 1 wherein the filter includes a plurality of bars, the plurality of bars connected to an outer ring of the filter.
12. A system for processing tissue in a closed pathway for maintaining sterility comprising:

22

- a first centrifuge tube having an essentially cylindrical body having a top, an inverse conical apex and an interior volume, the first centrifuge tube further comprising:
- at least two swabable valves, the at least two swabable valves comprising at least one extraction fitting; an extraction tube affixed to the at least one extraction fitting that extends a distance within the interior volume towards the apex;
 - a screen disposed within the interior volume of the body; and
 - a filter positioned below the screen in the inverse conical apex of the first centrifuge tube; and
- a second centrifuge tube comprising an essentially cylindrical body having a top, an inverse conical apex, and an interior volume, the second centrifuge tube further comprising at least one swabable valve, and an extraction tube releasably affixed to the at least one swabable valve that extends a distance within the interior volume towards the apex,
- wherein the second centrifuge tube is releasably connected via the at least one swabable valve to the at least one extraction fitting of the first centrifuge tube.
13. The system of claim 12 wherein the screen divides the interior volume of the first centrifuge tube into an upper portion and a lower portion, and further wherein the screen is adapted to disassociate the tissue in said lower portion.
14. The system of claim 12 further comprising a vacuum device connected to one of the at least two swabable valves for drawing tissue into the interior volume.
15. The system of claim 12 wherein the at least two swabable valves are located adjacent the top of the first centrifuge tube.
16. The system of claim 15 wherein the at least two swabable valves are disposed within a cap that affixes the top of the first centrifuge tube.
17. The system of claim 12 wherein the extraction tube variably extends a distance within the first centrifuge tube from the at least one extraction fitting towards the apex; and wherein the extraction tube is releasably affixed to the at least one extraction fitting.
18. The system of claim 12 further comprising a syringe connected to at least one of the at least two swabable valves for drawing tissue into the interior volume.
19. The system of claim 12, wherein the first centrifuge tube includes a cap secured to the first centrifuge tube by a cap ring, the cap including a plurality of openings with each of the plurality of openings including a fitting connected to each of the at least two swabable valves.
20. A multiple unit enabled system for processing tissue in a closed pathway for maintaining sterility comprising:
- a centrifuge tube having an essentially cylindrical body having a top, an inverse conical apex and an interior volume and further comprising:
 - at least two swabable valves, the at least two swabable valves comprising at least one extraction fitting,
 - an extraction tube affixed to the at least one extraction fitting that extends a distance within the interior volume towards the apex,
 - a screen disposed within the interior volume of the body, and
 - a filter being positioned below the screen in the inverse conical apex of the centrifuge tube; and,
 - a container having at least one swabable valve,

23

wherein the swabable valve can be releasably connected to the at least one extraction fitting of the centrifuge tube for a sterile transfer of material contained with the closed pathway.

21. The system of claim 20 further comprising a vacuum device connected to one of the swabable valves of the centrifuge tube for drawing tissue into the interior volume.

22. The system of claim 20 wherein the screen is configured to divide the interior volume in half; and wherein the extraction tube is releasably affixed to the at least one extraction fitting.

23. The system of claim 20 wherein the filter includes a plurality of bars, the plurality of bars connected to an outer ring of the filter.

24. The system of claim 20, wherein the centrifuge tube includes a cap secured to the centrifuge tube by a cap ring, the cap including a plurality of openings with each of the plurality of openings including a fitting connected to each of the at least two swabable valves.

25. A method for preparation of a fat graft, the method comprising the steps of:

- (a) performing a sterile transfer of lipoaspirate to a centrifuge tube comprising an upper cylindrical portion and a lower conical portion, a sterile tissue inlet fitting, at least one sterile processing fluid inlet fitting, a sterile suction fitting, and at least one sterile extraction port connected to a first extraction tube, the centrifuge tube further comprising a screen being positioned therein, and a filter positioned therein, the filter being positioned below the screen in the lower conical portion of the centrifuge tube;
- (b) washing the lipoaspirate in the centrifuge tube by adding one or more fluids via the at least one sterile processing fluid inlet fitting;
- (c) centrifuging the centrifuge tube containing the lipoaspirate at a low speed to separate contaminants and dense fat fraction, where the dense fat fraction remains on top of the screen and liquids are collected in the lower conical portion;
- (d) centrifuging the centrifuge tube containing the dense fat fraction at a higher speed to force at least a part of the dense fat fraction through pores of the screen by a centrifuge force in order to accumulate fat particles in a compartment between the screen and the filter, wherein a surface of the filter serves as a bottom for the fat particles, and wherein debris filter down through the filter to the lower conical portion;
- (e) collecting at least some of the fat particles by a syringe, and by connecting the syringe to at least one of the inlet with corresponding tubing leading to the compartment between the filter and the screen; and
- (f) administering the at least some of the fat particles to a patient for a therapeutic or cosmetic purpose.

26. The method of claim 25 further comprising, after step (e), transferring the at least some of the fat particles for further washing and concentration into a second centrifuge tube, and collecting the at least some of the fat particles by a needle inserted through a valve in the second centrifuge tube.

27. A centrifuge tube comprising:
 a body comprising a generally cylindrical portion and a conical portion having a bottom;
 a screen disposed within the body, the screen including a plurality of pores, the screen configured to support at least a part of a biological substance;
 a filter positioned in the conical portion and closer to the bottom of the conical portion than the screen, the filter

24

including a plurality of pores, the plurality of pores for the filter being smaller than the plurality of pores for the screen;

at least one tissue inlet fitting configured to introduce the biological substance into the generally cylindrical portion; and

at least one extraction port connected to tubing, an end of the tubing positioned in a section of the body between the screen and the filter;

wherein the plurality of pores of the screen are sized such that upon centrifugation, viscous tissue of the biological substance is broken down into smaller particles; and wherein the plurality of pores of the filter are sized such that upon centrifugation, a liquid fraction from the smaller particles is moved downward below the filter so that micronized tissue is positioned between the screen and the filter and supported by the filter.

28. The centrifuge tube of claim 27, wherein the screen is positioned at an intersection of the body between the generally cylindrical portion and the conical portion; and wherein a surface area of the screen is larger than a surface area of the filter.

29. The centrifuge tube of claim 28, wherein the plurality of pores for the screen are sized at about 1 mm; wherein the plurality of pores for the filter are sized at about 100 microns; and wherein, after centrifugation, cells of size under 100 microns are located at the bottom of the conical portion.

30. The centrifuge tube of claim 27, wherein the plurality of pores of the screen are sized such that centrifugation at a lower speed separates contaminants in the biological substance from dense fat fraction of the biological substance with the dense fat fraction remaining on the screen; and wherein the plurality of pores of the screen are sized such that centrifugation at a higher speed after centrifugation at the lower speed results in passing at least some of the dense fat fraction through the plurality of pores of the screen so that fat particles are in the section of the body between the screen and the filter.

31. The centrifuge tube of claim 30, wherein the plurality of pores of the filter are sized such that centrifugation at the higher speed results in debris passing through the plurality of pores of the filter.

32. The centrifuge tube of claim 27, wherein the filter includes a plurality of bars, the plurality of bars connected to an outer ring of the filter.

33. The centrifuge tube of claim 32, wherein the bars intersect a common axis.

34. The centrifuge tube of claim 27, further comprising a mixing ring, the mixing ring positioned in the generally cylindrical portion and further from the bottom of the conical portion than the screen, the mixing ring configured to facilitate homogenization of fat in the biological substance before centrifugation.

35. The centrifuge tube of claim 34, wherein the mixing ring comprising a plurality of spokes, the spokes emanating from a central axis; and

wherein the spokes are configured to trap threads of connective tissue in the biological substance during enzymatic digestion in order to prevent clotting of the screen and the filter.

36. The centrifuge tube of claim 34, wherein the mixing ring includes a plurality of openings, the plurality of openings being larger than the plurality of pores of the screen.